



**UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA**

**PERIPLASMIC EXPRESSION, RECOVERY AND QUANTIFICATION OF  
RECOMBINANT HUMAN INTERFERON-A2B IN FERMENTATION BY  
*ESCHERICHIA COLI***

**R. NAGASUNDARA RAMANAN**

**IB 2009 13**

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RECOMBINANT HUMAN INTERFERON-A2B IN FERMENTATION BY  
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**By**

**R. NAGASUNDARA RAMANAN**

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia,  
in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**2009**



## DEDICATION

*Dedicated to my beloved mother, family, friends and well wishers for their love,  
interest and encouragement*

Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

**Periplasmic Expression, Recovery and Quantification of Recombinant Human Interferon-A2b in Fermentation by *Escherichia coli***

By

**R. NAGASUNDARA RAMANAN**

**October 2009**

Chairman:     Arbakariya B. Ariff, PhD

Faculty:       Institute of Bioscience

Human interferon- $\alpha$ 2b (IFN- $\alpha$ 2b) is one of the biopharmaceuticals used to cure diseases such as hairy cell leukemia, malignant melanoma, and chronic hepatitis (B and C). Several areas related to the industrial problems, in the development of soluble IFN- $\alpha$ 2b from recombinant *Escherichia coli* were explored in this study, which include enhancement of expression in periplasm, cell disruption techniques, quantification method and purification.

The use of pET 26b(+) plasmid enhanced the periplasmic expression of IFN- $\alpha$ 2b (300 ng/mL) by about 3000 times in *E. coli* RG 2(DE3) as compared to that obtained in the previous recombinant strain (0.1 ng /mL) using pFLAG-ATS plasmid. Difference in the expression level was attributed to the difference in the promoters and the signal sequences. *In silico* analysis suggested that the enhancement was mainly due to the difference in the translation initiation caused by mRNA secondary structure of the plasmid.

The disruption of *E. coli* cells were investigated using glass bead shaking and homogenizer for small and large scale purpose, respectively. The optimum conditions for glass bead shaking were 30 min shaking at 300 rpm with 1.5 g/mL of glass beads (0.5 mm diameter). This technique was particularly useful for handling many samples at one time. The operating pressure range in a homogenizer was classified as low, transition and high pressures based on the characteristics of cell disintegrates. At low pressures, the protein release was mainly due to point break, which lead to high selectivity of IFN- $\alpha$ 2b release. At higher pressures, the maximum release of total protein and IFN- $\alpha$ 2b with a drastic reduction in cell size was observed after the first pass. Statistical optimization was used for osmotic shock process to release IFN- $\alpha$ 2b at high concentration, with less process waste. Optimal process was achieved at cell concentration of 0.05 g/mL in hypertonic and 0.2 g/mL in hypotonic solutions.

A rapid immunoassay method for quantification of IFN- $\alpha$ 2b was developed using surface plasmon resonance technique. Anti-interferon monoclonal antibody (anti-IFN) was immobilized onto the CM5 chip using an amine coupling method. The perfect linearity was observed between 10 and 200 ng/mL. The anti-IFN chip was found to be useful for more than 1000 cycles and could also be used in continuous running environment.

The efficacy of two activation methods using N-Hydroxysuccinimide in organic solvent (M I) and aqueous solution (M II) was assessed on CM Sepharose FF beads by immobilizing BSA onto it at various pH and ionic strengths. M I activation gave better immobilization efficiency than M II. Similar binding capacity was obtained

with beads immobilized at pH 5 and 8 using anti-IFN; and with crude IFN- $\alpha$ 2b as ligand and ligate.

Knowledge gained from the molecular work gave better understanding of the expression pathway for future improvement of periplasmic IFN- $\alpha$ 2b production by *E. coli*. Information and data obtained from this study were very useful for the development of efficient downstream and purification methods of IFN- $\alpha$ 2b from *E. coli* fermentation at reduced cost, as well as simple and cheap quantification method for quality control and process monitoring.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

**Pengekspresan Periplasmik, Pemulihan dan Pengiraan Rekombinan Interferon Manusia- $\alpha$ 2b di dalam Fermentasi oleh *Escherichia coli***

By

**R. NAGASUNDARA RAMANAN**

**Oktober 2009**

Pengerusi: Arbakariya B. Ariff, PhD

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Interferon manusia- $\alpha$ 2b (IFN- $\alpha$ 2b) adalah satu daripada produk biofarmaseutikal yang digunakan untuk merawat pelbagai penyakit seperti leukemia sel berumbai, kanser kulit malignan, dan hepatitis B dan C yang kronik. Beberapa masalah berkaitan industri dalam penghasilan IFN- $\alpha$ 2b dalam bentuk larut di dalam kawasan periplasmik *Escherichia coli* telah dikaji di dalam projek ini, termasuklah meningkatkan pengekspresan di dalam periplasmik, kaedah pemecahan sel, pengiraan dan proses penulenan.

Pemilihan pET 26b(+) sebagai plasmid meningkatkan pengekspresan IFN- $\alpha$ 2b sebanyak 3000 kali ganda iaitu 300 ng/mL di dalam *E. coli* RG 2(DE3) berbanding 0.1 ng/mL yang diperolehi oleh strain rekombinan yang menggunakan plasmid pFLAG-ATS sebelum ini. Nilai pengekspresan yang berbeza ini telah disebabkan oleh perbezaan di antara promoter dan jujukan penanda. Hasil dari analisa *in silico*, perbezaan semasa permulaan penterjemahan yang menyebabkan peningkatan pengekspresan IFN- $\alpha$ 2b adalah disebabkan oleh perbezaan struktur sekunder mRNA plasmid.

Pretasi pelbagai teknik, seperti goncangan butiran kaca, penghomogen dan kejutan osmotik, untuk pemecahan sel *E. coli* bagi melepaskan IFN- $\alpha$ 2b daripada periplasmik dalam skala kecil dan besar juga telah dikaji. Keadaan yang paling optimum bagi teknik goncangan butiran kaca adalah menggunakan 1.5 g/mL butiran kaca (berdiameter 0.5mm) pada kelajuan 300 rpm selama 30 minit. Teknik ini adalah sangat berguna dalam skala kecil bagi mengendalikan sampel yang banyak pada masa yang sama. Kitaran bagi operasi tekanan penghomogen boleh dikelaskan kepada tekanan rendah, peralihan dan tinggi berdasarkan sifat-sifat pemecahan sel. Pada tekanan rendah, kebanyakan protein yang dilepaskan adalah disebabkan oleh pemecahan tunjuk yang menghasilkan pelepasan IFN- $\alpha$ 2b dengan pemilihan yang tinggi. Pada tekanan tinggi, pembebasan yang maksima bagi kesemua protein dan IFN- $\alpha$ 2b dengan pengurangan yang ketara dalam saiz sel adalah dilihat selepas laluan yang pertama. Keputusan yang optimum bagi teknik ini adalah sama dengan keputusan yang diperolehi daripada teknik ultrasonikasi dan gegaran butiran kaca. Purata kos dan masa untuk pemprosesan juga dinilai bagi semua tekanan. Pengoptimuman menggunakan kaedah statistik telah digunakan untuk proses kejutan osmotik untuk melepaskan IFN- $\alpha$ 2b pada kepekatan yang tinggi, dengan sisa proses yang kurang. Daripada proses ini sebanyak 0.05 g/mL sel di dalam larutan hipertonik dan 0.2 g/mL di dalam larutan hipotonik adalah yang paling optimum.

Kaedah immunoesei untuk menentukan kuantiti IFN- $\alpha$ 2b telah dihasilkan menggunakan teknik "surface plasmon resonance" (SPR). Antibodi monoklonal anti interferon (anti-IFN) adalah dipegun ke atas cip CM5 menggunakan kaedah pengikatan amina. Keselarian sempurna telah diperhatikan di antara 10 dan 200



ng/mL. Cip anti IFN ini dapat bertahan untuk lebih daripada 1000 kitaran dan juga penggunaan secara berterusan.

Ketepatan dua kaedah pengaktifan menggunakan N-Hydroxysuccinimide dalam pelarut organik (M I) dan larutan (M II) telah dikaji pada manik CM Sepharose FF dengan menahan BSA ke atasnya pada pH dan kekuatan ion yang berbeza. Pengaktifan MI telah menghasilkan ketepatan penahanan yang lebih baik berbanding M II. Manik pegun pada pH 5 dan 8 menggunakan anti-IFN dan standard IFN- $\alpha$ 2b sebagai ligan dan ligat menunjukkan keupayaan pengikatan yang serupa.

Pengetahuan yang diperolehi daripada kajian sel biomolekul memberikan kefahaman berkaitan pengekspresan untuk peningkatan hasil IFN- $\alpha$ 2b dalam periplasmik daripada *E. coli*. Maklumat dan data yang diperolehi daripada kajian ini adalah berguna dalam pembangunan pemprosesan hiliran dan kaedah yang efektif untuk menuliskan IFN- $\alpha$ 2b daripada proses fermentasi *E. coli* dengan kos yang rendah, dan juga cara penentuan kuantiti yang mudah dan murah untuk pengawalan mutu dan pemantauan proses.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to show great gratitude to my Supervisor, Professor Dr. Arbakariya B. Ariff who accepted me as his graduate student, in spite of my decade long break from full time studies. I would also like to acknowledge his generous guidance, kindness, thoughtfulness and helpful and valuable support shown to me throughout the second part of my study path. Without him, it may not have been possible to upgrade from my MSc level to a PhD. Further, I would like to extend my gratitude to my co-supervisors; Associate Professor Dr. Ling Tau Chuan and Associate Professor Dr. Tey Beng Ti for their professional guidance, moral support and helpfulness throughout my research. Special thanks are also due to all of them for giving me full freedom to pursue my research in my own work style and for bearing up with my behavior especially during stressful periods before a deadline. Even during such difficult periods, they never gave any negative reply. This was very motivating and became my driving force which in turn helped me spend quality time in the laboratory and on the laptop. Thank you all once again.

Next, I would like to thank all my fellow researchers cum friends in Laboratory of Immunotherapeutics and Vaccines (LIVES) (Kelvin, Faizal, Tam, Lo, Caryn, Rajif, Fathimeh and others), Biotech 3 (Shamzi, Azlan, Palie and others) and UPM for their help and support. Also, I extend my full appreciation to Dr. Varma who helped me settle down in the initial part of my stay in Malaysia- making it a home away from home. I cannot forget to give my heartiest thanks to my research group brothers and sisters (Fadzli, Hamid, Joo Shun, Ani, Chien Wei, Hor Shee, Amira, Kiat and others) for their continuous support, knowledge sharing and great assistance during my stay

in Malaysia. Special thanks are also due to all the staff of LIVES, Institute of Bioscience (IBS) and Biotech 3 for their kind assistance in all the matters.

At this juncture, I would like to thank lecturers and professors of Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) who assisted, motivated and encouraged me during my course of study; particularly, Professor Dr. Abdul Rahman Omar (Deputy Director, IBS) for assisting me during the conversion of MSc to PhD, Senior Lecturer Dr. Vijay Kumar Mallan (Faculty of Modern Language and Communication) for his valuable workshop regarding Publishing for Postgraduates and Professor Dato' Dr. Sheikh Omar Abdul Rahman (Faculty of Veterinary Medicine) for his motivation talk.

I am indebted to my beloved mother and family for their tolerance, sacrifices and patience as they were unable to see me at all during this PhD career.

I am grateful to my mentors and well wishers especially, Professor S.V. Raman who helped me build a strong foundation in Chemical Engineering, and Mrs. Rohini Rajagopalan for helping polish my language during this study.

Last but not the least, I would like to acknowledge the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation, (MOSTI) Malaysia for funding this study under the SR IRPA research grant (Project Number: 03-02-04 SR2010 SR0008/05) and UPM for providing me with the graduate research fellowship.

I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on 27.10.2009 to conduct the final examination of R. Nagasundara Ramanan on his thesis entitled “Periplasmic Expression, Recovery and Quantification of Recombinant Human Interferon-A2b in Fermentation by *Escherichia coli*” in accordance with the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U.(A) 106] 15 March 1998. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the Doctor of Philosophy.

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## **DECLARATION**

I declare that the thesis is my original work except for quotation and citations which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously, and is not concurrently, submitted for any other degree at Universiti Putra Malaysia or at any other institution.

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**R. NAGASUNDARA RAMANAN**

Date:

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